

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 STRE-00 AGRE-00 CEA-01

CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 FRB-03 H-01 INR-10 INT-05

L-03 LAB-04 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 CTME-00 AID-05

SS-15 STR-07 ITC-01 TRSE-00 ICA-11 SP-02 SOE-02

OMB-01 DOE-15 /124 W

-----063510 270340Z /73

R 261000Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 138

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 1885

DEPT PASS STR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MTN, ETRD, SN

SUBJECT: BILATERAL MTN MEETING WITH SINGAPORE

REFS: (A) SINGAPORE 1815, (B) SINGAPORE 1813

1. REF A DESCRIBES USEFUL OUTCOME OF APRIL 21 BILATERAL MEETING ON MTN WITH SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT DURING WHICH GOS REPS INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO MAKE CONTRIBUTION IN RETURN FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN US OFFER. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT SINGAPORE IS FIRST LDC TO AGREE EVEN CONDITIONALLY TO MAKING A CONTRIBUTION OUTSIDE TROPICAL PRODUCTS CONTEXT.

2. EMBASSY RECOGNIZES USEFULNESS TO USG OF "DEMONSTRATION EFFECT" INVOLVED IN GOS OFFER TO CONTRIBUTE, AND SINGAPORE IS NO DOUBT AWARE THAT IT MAY BE CITED AS EXAMPLE TO LESS FORTHCOMING LDCS.  
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WE STRONGLY URGE, HOWEVER, THAT GOS NOT BE CITED TOO OFTEN OR TOO PUBLICLY AS LDC THAT HAS SEEN THE LIGHT.

3. WERE THESE TALKS CONDUCTED STRICTLY BILATERALLY RATHER THAN IN ASEAN CONTEXT, WE THINK IT UNLIKELY THAT SINGAPORE WOULD HAVE BEEN FIRST TO BREAK RANKS WITH G-77 OR ASEAN. KEY FACTORS IN GOS DECISION TO COOPERATE PROBABLY ARE (A) PM LEE'S COMMITMENT

TO AMBASSADOR WOLFF TO DO WHAT HE COULD TO FURTHER ACTIVE LDC PARTICIPATION IN MTN, (B) GOS BELIEF IN VIRTUES OF FREE TRADE, AND (C) GOS EXPECTATION OF GENEROUS IMPROVEMENT OF USG OFFER. AS A PROSPEROUS, ETHNIC CHINESE COUNTRY AMIDST LESS SUCCESSFUL NON-CHINESE NEIGHBORS, HOWEVER, SINGAPORE CONSIDERS IT ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN A LOW PROFILE AMONG THE NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES AND TO TOE THE ASEAN AND G-77 LINE WHENEVER IT CAN DO SO WITHOUT DAMAGING IMPORTANT NATIONAL INTERESTS. WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE TO INDICATE THAT THERE WAS ANY SORT OF PRIOR ASEAN AGREEMENT THAT EACH PARTNER SHOULD MOVE AHEAD AS IT SAW FIT IN BILATERALS WITH THE US, BUT IT SEEMS MOST LIKELY THAT SINGAPORE HAD REASON TO BELIEVE IT WOULD NOT BE ALONE IN ASEAN IN RESPONDING TO US REQUESTS. INDEED IN US-ASEAN MTN TALKS WHICH PRECEDED THE US-SINGAPORE BILATERAL (REF B), AMBASSADOR VEGA INDICATED THAT ASEAN WOULD RESPOND TO US REQUESTS IN A POSITIVE MANNER IF THEY COULD BE ASSURED OF ADDITIONAL BENEFITS STEMMING FROM BILATERALS.

4. WE FEAR THAT TOO MUCH EMPHASIS ON SINGAPORE'S WILLINGNESS TO BREAK WITH G-77 COULD BACKFIRE, CAUSING SOME SISMAY AMONG GOS LEADERSHIP AND MAKING GOS EVEN MORE CAUTIOUS IN FOLLOW-ON NEGOTIATIONS. IN ADDITION, SUCH PUBLICITY COULD SIGNIFICANTLY LESSEN USEFULNESS OF GOS'S MODERATING INFLUENCE IN LDC COUNCILS. WE HAVE COMMENTED BEFORE ON EVIDENCE OF SINGAPORE'S DECISION TO ALIGN ITSELF FIRMLY WITH WESTERN ECONOMIES DESPITE ITS NOMINAL THIRD WORLD CREDENTIALS, AND WE CONSIDER IT ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT

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NOW TO AVOID EMBARRASSING GOS WHEN IT IS ATTEMPTING TO BE HELPFUL TO US.

HOLDRIDGE

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Reference:** 78 SINGAPORE 1815, 78 SINGAPORE 1813  
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**Review Markings:**  
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